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**SPEAKING NOTES FOR
THE HONOURABLE ANNE MCLELLAN
MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA
AT
THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF
MR. JUSTICE LOUIS LEBEL**

**February 14, 2000
Ottawa**

As delivered

Madam Chief Justice McLachlin, Mr. Justice LeBel, members of the Bench and Bar, honoured guests, family and friends of Mr. Justice LeBel:

It is my honour and pleasure to be here today to mark the appointment of Mr. Justice LeBel to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Occasions such as today's are important, certainly for the individual being honoured, but also for the opportunity they provide to reaffirm our commitment to our judicial system and the principles of fairness, integrity and impartiality that underpin its function. These qualities are equally characteristic of the Canadian judiciary ¾ and are certainly descriptive of the manner in which Mr. Justice LeBel has carried out his duties as one of the country's leading jurists.

The respect that is held for the Canadian judicial system is a basic factor in our strength and stability. The traditional independence of Canadian judges is not only an important element of our demographic framework, but it also provides a model that gives hope and inspiration to others.

The government of Canada recognizes that the independence of judges is the cornerstone of developing strong democratic institutions and traditions.

And it is because of the commitment of judges like Mr. Justice LeBel to these fundamental principles that our democratic institutions and traditions are the envy of the world.

The legal community regards Mr. Justice LeBel as an excellent jurist. He is a person who is distinguished by his learning and strong intellectual qualities. He is also known as a person who, demonstrates exemplary behaviour on the bench, he always acts politely and very courteously.

The combination of his profound understanding of the law and the respectful approach he takes in its application has, no doubt, contributed to the success Mr. Justice LeBel has enjoyed in his 15 years as a distinguished member of the Quebec Court of Appeal.

A prodigious worker, during his time on that Court, Mr. Justice LeBel was known not only for the great number of judgements rendered but also for the well-researched and analytical nature of his decisions. It is precisely these qualities that make Mr. Justice LeBel so well suited to join this Court.

Before being appointed to the Quebec Court of Appeal in 1984, Mr. Justice LeBel practised law with the firm of Désilets, Grondin, LeBel. During the 21 years he spent in practice, Mr. Justice LeBel also served as a visiting professor at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law, and as an Instructor for the Human Relations Program at Laval University, Faculty of Law. As well, Mr. Justice LeBel was active in le Barreau du Québec, serving as Vice-President of that organization in 1983. Mr. Justice LeBel is also a distinguished author on areas of civil and labour law, perhaps most notably, "Droit du Travail".

In whatever role he has played ¾ lawyer, professor, author, judge ¾ Mr. Justice LeBel has excelled. I have no doubt, Mr Justice LeBel, that this reputation for excellence ¾ so well deserved ¾ will continue as you take up your new duties as a member of this Court. Canadians and our justice system will be the direct beneficiaries of your hard work and love of the law.

In the name of the Government of Canada, I extend my warmest wishes to you and offer my congratulations on your appointment to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Thank you.

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